

Filed for intro on 03/01/2001

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 95
By Rochelle

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate the congregation of
Williamson Chapel Christian Methodist
Episcopal Church upon the celebration of the
church's 115th anniversary.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should recognize those churches that
have been long-standing fixtures in their communities and ongoing sources of fellowship and
comfort; and

WHEREAS, one such church is the Williamson Chapel Christian Methodist Episcopal
Church, nestled in the western Wilson county community of Needmore; and

WHEREAS, between 1840 and 1850 Richard Williamson, a black man of that area,
which at that time was part of one of the larger Tennessee plantations, organized a Methodist
church which came to be called Williamson Chapel; and

WHEREAS, the church was organized upon an acre of land donated by the Mastman
family, owners of the large plantation of West Wilson County; and

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WHEREAS, the church still stands today, and the present congregation prepares to celebrate its 115th anniversary with a variety of festivities themed “A Transformed Church Living in Hope for the Life of the World”; and

WHEREAS, the festivities will take place on the 18th of March, 2001, and the Reverend Woodrow W. Harris, Jr. will initiate the event with a heartfelt sermon; and

WHEREAS, the Presiding Elder is the Reverend Dr. Charles E. Winfrey, and the Presiding Bishop is the Reverend William O. Graves; and

WHEREAS, several of the descendants of the slaves of the Mastman plantation continue to reside in the Needmore community and worship at Williamson Chapel Christian Methodist Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, there is no record of the pastorate and church activities before 1886, but in 1886, the property of the church was registered in the names of trustees Joe Johnson, Hiram Williamson, Jessie Parker, Cal Gordon, and John Horton; and

WHEREAS, some presiding pastors after that time were the Reverends A.J. Parker, A.H. Jenkins, D.R. Wiles, W.R. Potter, E. Wiley, D.I. Wynn, and H. Oldham; and

WHEREAS, in 1936, when the Reverend John H. Britton was assigned to Williamson Chapel, the church began to take on a new life: the structure was renovated, electricity was installed, a coal furnace was placed under the church, a choir room and pastor’s study were added, and choir robes were purchased for the first time to clothe a newly organized choir; and

WHEREAS, under the Reverend Britton’s leadership, Williamson Chapel began a period of growth which continued throughout his fifteen year tenure as pastor; and

WHEREAS, during that period, Williamson Chapel came to be known not only for its strong leadership, but for its musically-talented members as well, a reputation that still holds strong today; and

WHEREAS, the church's vitality and growth were expanded upon by the Reverends Clarence Bagwell, Frank Hudson, Wiley Hatchett, Dr. Solomon N. Shannon, and George W. Coleman; and

WHEREAS, it is with great pride that this General Assembly offers its praise and recognition to the congregation of Williamson Chapel Christian Methodist Episcopal Church for their participation in the rich history of such a noteworthy institution and for the beauty of their faith; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we honor and congratulate the members of Williamson Chapel upon the celebration of the 115th anniversary of their church, and we wish for them continued success in all of their future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.